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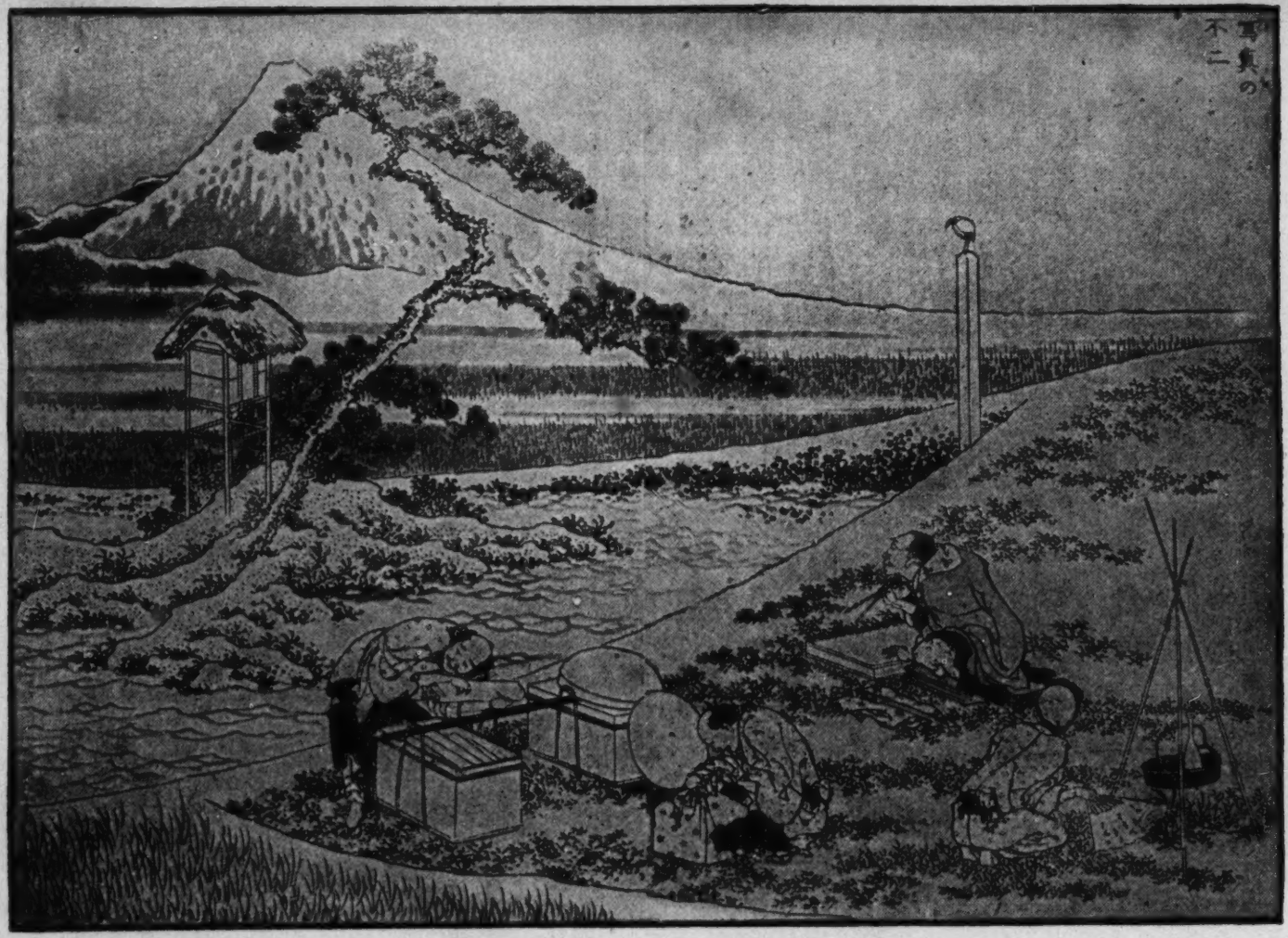


HOKUSAI SKETCHING THE PEERLESS MOUNTAIN.

(10)

CATALOGUE

OF A

COLLECTION OF

DRAWINGS AND ENGRAVINGS

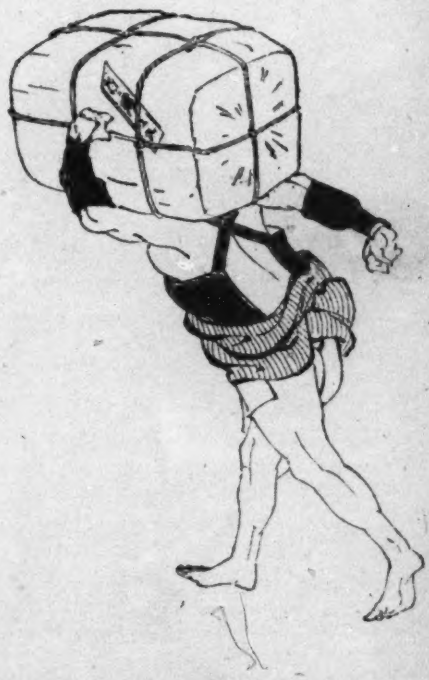
BY

HOKUSAI.

EXHIBITED AT

THE FINE ART

SOCIETY'S.



148, NEW BOND STREET, W.
LONDON.
1890.

Introductory Note.

THE Western world, in its appreciation of Japanese Art, has, until very lately, been somewhat apathetic and unreasonable.

Apathetic in that it has been content to take everything as typical of Japanese Art, even when, as is at present the case, almost every article which comes from that country has been conceived and planned on foreign models. Apathetic in that both the vendor and purchaser over here are content so long as the ware was made in Japan, or in China, both countries being synonymous in most people's minds. Apathetic even to the extent of holding up his neighbour as a Goth if he cannot distinguish between Worcester or Wedgwood or Crown Derby, yet accepting without demur the bland reply of the shopman when he sells a piece of Eastern faïence, "I assure you, sir, it's real Japanese," although the differences which exist in Japanese articles are even

more marked than in those just named. So long as the classes and the masses rest satisfied with such a standard of knowledge as this, so long will those who consider the Art of Japan a notable one, strive in vain to bring about a proper understanding of it.

And the world has been and is as unreasonable as it is apathetic. For it demands of Japanese Art a standard equal to that of the finest western Art at its highest pitch of perfection, and if it sees the least failing either in, for instance, the draughtsmanship of the human body or the laws of perspective, it will examine the subject no further, and refuses to allow it any place in the world's Academy of Art.

With much unfairness it adopts this line of criticism towards a country which, within the memory of man, it regarded as inhabited by a race of savages, whilst it extols as fine Art the most debased Indian or Burmese Art, simply because it may have been purchased whilst touring through the country of its origin, and consequently have some associations connected with it.

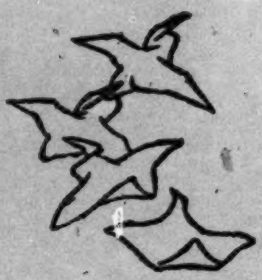
An attempt was made to dissipate these prejudices in the Exhibition of Japanese Industrial Art held in these Rooms in 1888, but no place could be found in that collection for paintings and engravings about which even less is known here than of other branches of

that country's Art. The exhibition was, however, convincing to all who saw it that in many branches of Art—for instance, in metal work and lacquer—Japan had no rivals in what are commonly termed the most civilised countries.

A chance of completing the gap in the collection just named presented itself last spring, when an exhibition opened in Paris, under the auspices of the French

Government, of Japanese paintings, drawings, and engravings. To show the many hundreds which were exhibited at the École des Beaux Arts would have been an impossibility, and therefore the writer confined his attention to obtaining a representation of the principal artist of that portion of it which appeared to him as likely to be the most popular, namely, of the works of Hokusai, the renowned master of the Ukiyo-yé School.

For as this is the school whose works in its last stage of decadence are most frequently brought under our notice in every shop where Japanese prints find a sale, so it is one which, by its delineation of the more modern aspects of Japanese life is more certain of finding favour at the present day than the works of the elder schools which by their austerity appeal to a much smaller public.



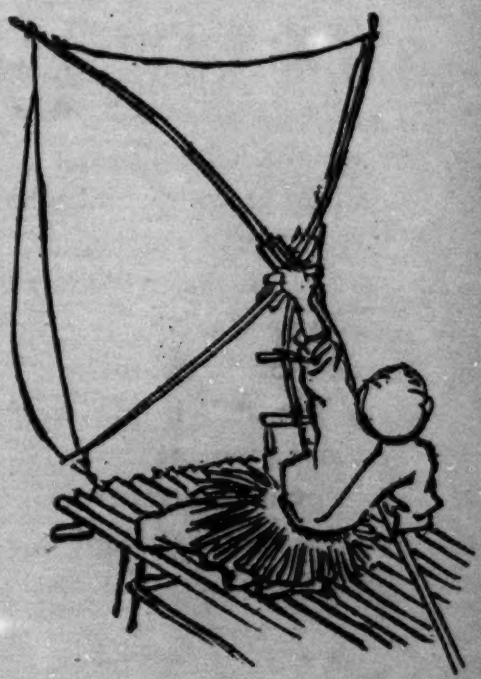
Through the aid of Mons. Bing, who has recently been decorated by the French Government for his services in connection with Japanese art, the present collection has been assembled, a collection which it would have been impossible to get together in England, or, we believe, in any other country save France.

The Ukiyo-yé Riu School, to which Hokusai belonged, arose at the close of the seventeenth century. It owed its birth to a desire amongst the masses of an intelligent and art-imbued people for an Art of a more vital and individual nature than the worn-out formulæ of a style which had remained unaltered through several centuries, and which seldom condescended to treat of subjects within the range of daily life.

The earliest attempts in this direction date back to the first years

of the seventeenth century, but it was not until nearly a hundred years later that, assisted by the revival of wood engraving and printing in colours, a long and talented line of artists arose, who have been classed under the name of the popular school, Ukiyo-yé signifying the passing world. These found a field of subject which had up till then been absolutely overlooked, namely, the life of the people in town and country, at work and at play. It was a century later, and when the school was full of vitality, that the author of the works in this exhibition was born, and it was under his influence that it extended its boundaries and completed the right to its appellation.

Although very elaborate lists and memoirs of Japanese artists have been published, these usually convey but little impression of the individuals' personality, and it is difficult to conjure up any conception of it from them. But in the case of Hokusai we are better informed. He has shown us, as in the case of the block which forms the Frontispiece to this catalogue, an effigy of himself at work; he has written prefaces to his engraved works, which unfold his mind to us; and to those who have formed any acquaintance with these, it is no exaggeration to say



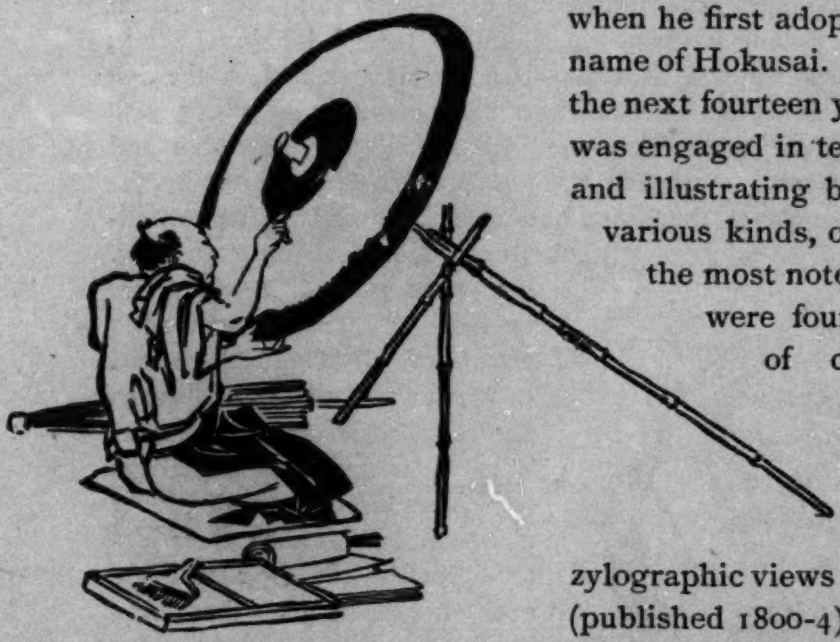
that not only have they a certain knowledge of the man, but they have a personal acquaintance with him which amounts in many cases to friendship—nay, even affection.

Katsu-shika Hókusai was born at Yedo, in 1760. His father was Nakajima Isé, a metal-mirror maker, who was attached to the household of the Shogun. His first master was Katsugawa Shunsho, and after the usual fashion of pupils he took the additional name of Shunro; at intervals during his life he adopted many *noms de plume*, amongst them Sôri, Saito, Toki-taro, and Katsu-shika Hokusai (Katsu-shika being a ward of Yedo in which he lived, and Hoku-sai a Chinese compound which may pass for "northern studio"). In his old age he styled himself Gwa-kio Rojin Man, *i.e.*, "the old fellow mad on drawing."

But little is known of his life save his industriousness. He commenced in infancy and never abandoned the pencil and brush until death called him away in 1849 at the age of eighty-nine. Towards the end of his career he is said

to have been assisted by his daughter, a young girl of great beauty. From a native biographer we learn that he could draw with anything, "an egg, a quart measure, a bottle, or with his thumb-nail, and could use his left hand as well as his right. He was perpetually finding new outlets for his skill, and from the signboard of a perfumer to that of a theatre, from an oil painting to Dutch painting, he left nothing unattempted."

His first known works are woodcuts attached to verses, New Year cards, and cheap novelettes, all of which give promise of the genius afterwards exhibited. His earliest important work is the frontispiece to a volume of colour-prints (the "Thirty-Six Famous Poetesses"). This was issued in 1798, when he first adopted his name of Hokusai. During the next fourteen years he was engaged in teaching, and illustrating books of various kinds, of which the most noteworthy were four series of chromo-



zylographic views of Yedo (published 1800-4).

The "Man-gwa," or "Rough Sketches" (see books in case) by which he is best known, commenced in 1812. Mr. William

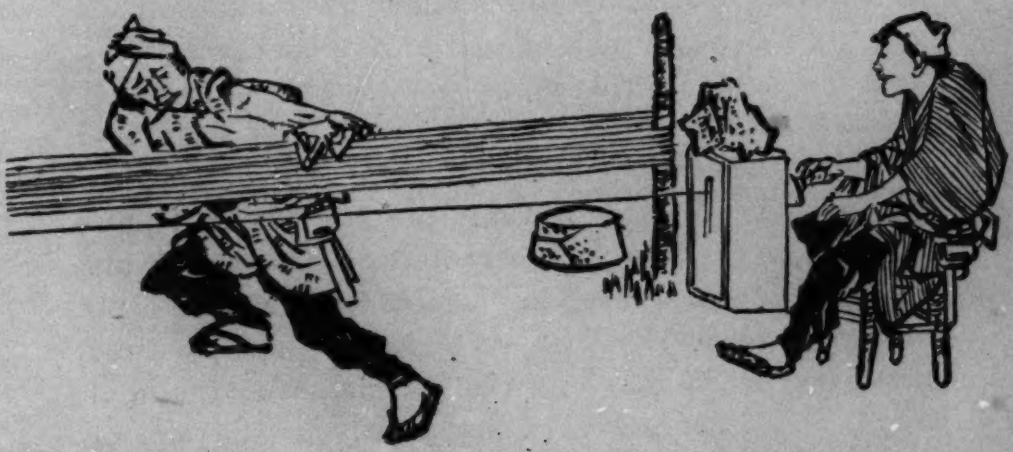
Anderson thus speaks of this work in his "Catalogue of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum."*

"The appearance of the first volume was the turning-point in Hokusai's career. The novelty and grace of the woodcuts conveyed the news of the draughtsman's genius to all who could pay the small sum required for the purchase of the little volume, and the author rose to the position of a celebrity in his own wide but humble sphere. A new series was called for and supplied, and Hokusai, now over fifty years of age, began to reap the reward of the patient labour of his early and middle life. His hours were soon monopolised by the demands of publishers for fresh volumes, but his inexhaustible imagination and unwearying energy made it a simple task to build up the big edifice of books upon which his name is inscribed. The success of his experiment was great, although the more critical of his patrons found some lack of calligraphic dexterity in his touch and of refinement in his treatment of the multitude of themes to which he turned his facile hand; but it was to the people at large that his art appealed, in the rich profusion of sketches that mirrored their everyday life with a truth that could only come from one who shared their thoughts and feelings, a truth directed by close observation and pointed by the quaint humour of the artist, but never poisoned by coarse, ill-natured or misconceiving caricature. For there were printed, in characters that the most unlearned could read, a record of all the little social ceremonials that were as dear to the shopkeeper or workman as were more imposing formalities to the samurai or daimio; their child-like amusements, their historical landmarks, their folk-lore, and the homely jokes that never lost by repetition; and at every

* This volume contains (page 357) a complete list of all the works illustrated by Hokusai.

page a holiday resort, a household pet, a favourite flower, or some other of the thousand familiar objects of their simple existence, were summoned vividly before them by the magic of a few swift strokes of the artist's pencil. It would be difficult to conceive a work more calculated to impress those for whom it was intended, or to give the student of old Japan a more undistorted view of the sentiments and tastes of the easy-going multitudes who fill the closely-packed streets and alleys of the chief city of the Land of the Rising Sun.

"Thus, at an age that to an ordinary man would have prompted a retirement from active employment, did the artist begin the labour that was to form the keystone of his renown. From the date of



the appearance of his sketch book, the rich storehouse of mind and skill yielded volume after volume, until the total of his handiwork represented a sum of originality attained by few of the artists of any country, and by none of his own. The 'Rough Sketches' alone, in its fourteen closely-filled volumes, would have been a worthy life-work; but these records of his versatility and industry are but a small part of his legacy. Even as late as 1836 he was still adding important works to the list, and these included the 'É-hon Suiko-den,' the 'Fugaku hiak 'kei,' the 'É-hon Saki Gaké,' and the 'Musashi Abumi," which are regarded as some of his most vigorous productions. At this date he was nearly eighty, but in robust health, and his eyes, clear and true as at the beginning of

his career, were independent of the optician's aid. His green old age brought neither impairment of faculties nor desire for repose; and of his subsequent works, some of the latest, the sketches in the 'Sōzan Chōmon Kishin' painted at the age of eighty-eight, would scarcely lose by comparison with the productions of his best period; and the 'É-hon Saishiki-tsu,' issued two years before his death, was a bold effort on the part of a man approaching his tenth decade to elucidate his methods by a manual of instruction, that showed no loss of firmness of hand. It appears to have been amongst the last efforts of his extraordinary energies."

In his preface to his "Fugaku hiak 'kei," or "Hundred Views of Fuji" (see books in case), one of Hokusai's most characteristic works, and which has the advantage to many of being purchaseable with English descriptions from the hand of Mr. Dickens—he wrote thus of himself and of his constant striving after life and movement:—

"Ever since the age of six I had a mania for drawing the forms of objects. Towards the age of fifty I published a very large number of drawings, but I am dissatisfied with everything which I produced before the age of seventy. It was at the age of seventy-three that I had nearly mastered the real nature and form of birds, fish, plants, &c. Consequently at the age of eighty I shall have made a great deal of progress; at ninety I shall have got to the bottom of things; at a hundred I shall have attained a decidedly higher level which I cannot define; and at the age of a hundred and ten every dot and every line from my brush will be alive. I call on those who may live as long as I to see if I keep my word. Written at the age

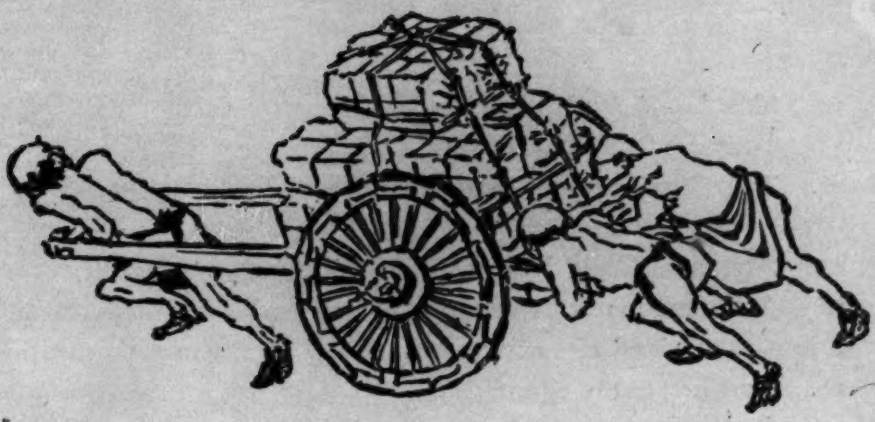
of seventy-five by me, formerly Hokusai, now Gwa-kio Rojin—the old man mad about drawing."

Few of Hokusai's drawings remain, most of them having been destroyed in the process of transference to the wood block. The Anderson Collection at the British Museum contains seven, but there are but few others in this country. So, too, fine impressions of the majority of his woodcuts are both rare and costly. This will be readily understood when it is remembered that little store would be set upon them by the class they were intended for, that many were merely used upon the occasion of festivals, theatrical representations, and suchlike, and that at the date when they were made there would be few collectors of such ephemeral and unconsidered trifles.

Representing, as many of them do, the epoch of colour engraving when Japan was seen at its best and attained to a proficiency which has hardly been excelled by any other nation, their value in course of time is assured.

A literary friend of Hokusai's, writing the introduction to one of the "Man-gwa" volumes, records how on one occasion he travelled from place to place seeing all the wonderful sights of his native land; how, in consequence, "all his soul was filled with the immeasurable grandeur of nature"; how "the beauty of flowers, the glory of the tinted wood, the shimmer of moonlight, the gleam of winter snow, the joys of spring and the delights of autumn made his heart well nigh burst with ecstasy," and how he awoke to find this was but a dream conjured up by lying with a volume illustrated by the master as a pillow for his head! Such an appreciation as this can hardly be expected in these times when the Art of every nation can be studied to satiety within a stone's throw of one's dwelling, but we may confidently hope that this exhibition may result in increasing the estimation in this country of an artist than whom no more honest a worker ever toiled in the field of Art.

MARCUS B. HUISH.



Catalogue.

NOTE.—Where not otherwise stated the Exhibit is an Engraving.
A Surimono is a New Year's card.

No.

1. Kakemono. A demon squatting with his pipe and tobacco.
2. A Surimono; four portraits of ladies.
3. The Dolls' Fête on the 5th day of the 5th month.
4. Sketch. Two Subjects: A. Plum-tree in blossom; B. A Sparrow under bamboos.
5. Sketch. A Scavenger and a Tortoise.
6. The great Bridge at Yedo on a fête day.
7. Illustration to a poem on the moon.
8. Sketch. A Young Woman carrying a lantern (Chinese ink).
9. Sketch. Cucumber flower.
10. Surimono; maple tree.
11. A Warrior's Tent at the foot of Mount Fuji.
12. Wave study. View near Kanagawa.
13. Sketch. A Cock and Hen.

No.

14. Sketch. A study of Crows.
15. Drawing for wood-block.
16. The Japanese poet Abéno composing in China his ode to the moon.
17. Sketch. Young Lady and Child walking.
18. A Surimono; women and children gathering shells, near the island of Yeno Shemi.
19. Sketch. Study of a Tiger.
20. A Daimio under the verandah of his palace.
21. View of Takanawa.
22. A Sketch of two dolls and a flowering plum-tree.
23. Sketch. Two studies of Birds.
24. The Promenade.
25. Kakemono. A Young Woman walking by a garden fence.
26. Kakemono. Temple keeper on a barrel painting a temple entrance (Torii).
27. Kakemono. A Daimio, in gala costume, kneeling before his shogun, who is seated behind a blind.
28. Kakemono. Woman winding a skein of silk.
29. Kakemono. Tokiwa flying with her three sons, the youngest of whom is the hero Yoshitsune.
30. A Surimono; the fête day.
31. A Surimono; children with a doll (Dharuma).
32. The Ferry Boat.
33. A Surimono; two children looking at a Panorama.
34. A Surimono; two young women, with guitar and lantern.
35. The Ronins' attack on the Castle.
36. Sketch. A Crayfish and a Shell.
37. Two Sketches: A. Two Rats wrestling before a judge; B. A Frog.
38. Illustration to the poems of Tshorai.
39. Studying floral designs. On a terrace overlooking the Sumida.

No.

40. The old poet Rihaku ascends a mountain, supported by two children, in order to compose a poem on a waterfall.
41. Sketch of dresses.
42. A Surimono ; dresses, books, and flowers.
43. Drawing for a wood-block
44. Snow figure of Dharuma (on silk).
45. Sketch. A Sculptor of masks.
46. Sketch. A Snake and Skull.
47. Winter Landscape.
48. Illustrations to the history of a Chinese Prince, who effects his escape from prison owing to the fidelity of his retainers.
49. Sketch. A Young Woman with mouse running up her arm.
50. Surimono : waterside village.
51. Landscape.
52. The Footpath by the Irises.
53. Sketch. A Mountainous Landscape on the sea-shore, the foreground in Chinese ink, and the high mountains in a blue wash.
54. Sketch. A Study of Rats.
55. Drawing for wood-block.
56. Sketch. A Rice Field in winter.
57. Reflections in the water near Missaka.
58. Women preparing stuff for dyeing.
59. Sketch. A Young Lady lying down.
60. The Fish-market.
61. A Landscape.
62. A noble lady on horseback on the road near Mount Fuji.
63. The Return from the Fête.
64. Sketch. Study of Musical Instruments.
65. Dasha on a buffalo, playing the flute.
66. A Surimono ; a rustic view on crepe paper.
67. Yama Mata Yama.

No.

68. Sketch. Group of Fish and Crabs.
69. A Temple Court.
70. A Bird on a branch of a cherry-tree.
71. A Surimono; a young woman in the snow.
72. Sketch. A Flight of Birds before the new moon.
73. The Rising Tide.
74. Sketch. Four studies for engraving: A. A Nobleman praying; B. Trunk of a plum-tree and a young pine; C. Tree and flowering plant; D. Persons talking to a prisoner.
75. A company of ladies attended by a Samurai.
76. Rest by the way.
77. A Female Pilgrim.
78. The Chat.
79. A Daimio watching a young woman executing the cat dance.
80. Sagami Bay and the Island of Yénoshima.
81. Toto Shokei Itchiran.
82. Sketch. A Man and Woman.
83. Salt Makers getting water from the sea.
84. Bird and Flowers.
85. A Surimono; woman and two men seated before a screen.
86. Sketch. A Young Woman walking.
87. A Surimono; a woman at a loom.
88. Washerwomen.
89. The Yoshiwara quarter at Yedo.
90. Sai Kaitsho Street, at Yedo. Crowd going to a theatre.
91. Rice-cutting. The peasant's contemplation of the sacred mountain.
92. Six Sketches: A. Two Warriors; B. Two Toads; C. The God Hotéi, dancing dolls; D. A Warrior and a Flute Player; E. A Workman; F. A Nobleman, seated.
93. Dyers by a Stream.
94. Illustration to a poem on a woman seeking her lost husband.

No.

95. The Promenade, by the Sumida-Gawa.
96. Drawing of a lady asleep.
97. Drawing for wood engraving—Ferry-boat crossing the Sumida River.
98. A Surimono; Tsha charging seated before a screen.
99. Toto Shokei Itchiran. View of Yedo.
100. A Surimono; young girl dressing.
101. A Surimono; young girl at her toilet.
102. Sketch. Three studies for engraving: A. A Buddhist Divinity; B. The Goddess Kwannon; C. A Serpent swallowing an elephant.
103. Illustration to a poem on autumn sadness.
104. Sketch. Two Subjects: A. Fishing Village; B. A Man carrying bottles in a snow storm.
105. A Surimono; showing the road.
106. A Surimono; planting fir-trees.
107. Sketch. Two Subjects: A. Study of Cactus; B. Trunk of a pine-tree.
108. Sketch. A Study of fish, beanpods, and pomegranates.
109. A Surimono; a young mother and her child in the country.
110. A Surimono; a commemorative inscription, erected in sight of Mount Fuji.
111. A Surimono; a nobleman and his servant walking on the banks of the Sumidagawa.
112. A Surimono; cup containing asparagus.
113. Trunk of an old plum-tree in flower.
114. Sketch. Goro and Inro fighting.
115. A Surimono; a servant carrying an incense burner.
116. A Surimono; after the feast.
117. A Warrior at prayer.
118. Five Sketches: A. A Crayfish's Head; B. Man, carrying a large turnip; C. Man, with a panier; D. Two Strollers seated on a bench; E. A Fish and a Frog.
119. A Surimono; two young women at sunset on a river bank.

N°.

120. A Surimono ; young women making fans.
121. View at the water side.
122. Sketch. Hidésato on Horseback.
123. A Surimono ; a young woman unwinding a skein.
124. A Surimono ; a nobleman dressing.
125. A Surimono ; an inn on the Tokaido.
126. Illustration to the poems of Tshorai.
127. Sketch. A Puppy, at the side of a tile.
128. Sketch. A Gardener smoking his pipe and watching the sun. These men travel from place to place in search of work.
129. A Surimono ; two young ladies gathering pine branches.
130. Illustration to the poems of Tshorai.
131. Kakemono. The God Hotéi.
132. Kakemono. A Young Woman, with long train.
133. Kakemono. A Red Lobster.
134. Kakemono. A Young Lady walking.
135. Kakemono. Painting in Chinese ink. An old washer-woman.
136. Hototoguni and Azaleas.
137. Illustration to the poems of Tshorai.
138. Two sketches of Personages.
139. Illustration to the poems of Tshorai.
140. Landscape, with waterfall and bridge.
141. Sketch. A Serpent watching a small bird.
142. Sketch. Two Subjects: A. Storm of rain on a wooded island ; B. Abeno watching the flight of a bird.
143. A Surimono ; a young woman cutting grass.
144. Toto Shokei Itchiran. View of Yedo.
145. Yama Mata Yama.
146. Fishing Village on a lake side.
147. Drawing of a lady and horse.
148. Three small sketches of Personages.

No.

149. A Surimono; young man unrolling a kakenovo.
150. A Surimono; nobleman in a boat passing a garden fence.
151. Yama Mata Yama. View of Yedo.
152. One of the series of Goblins. A demon before a child's head.
153. Sketch. A Young Lady.
154. Sketch. A Cock.
155. A Surimono; birds in the grass, and a temple near a waterfall.
156. Illustration to a poem.
157. Sketch. A Woman carrying a child on her back.
158. The Smoker.
159. Sketch. A monster with a serpent's body, holding an arrow between his teeth.
160. Young Woman with basket.
161. A Fishing Village.
162. Surimono: the temple, and a roof of a house.
163. Sketch. A Fan. Two children walking in the country near Mount Fuji.
164. Sketch. A Woman lying down on a brazier, a child in gala costume handing her a cup of tea.
165. A Surimono; crossing the bridge.
166. A Surimono; nobleman on horseback, crossing a ford.
167. The Bay of Kama Kura.
168. Six Sketches: A. Ascending the Temple staircase; B. A Frog, on a trunk of a tree; C. An Old Man, seated on a bench; D. Flight of Birds; E. A Stalk of Grass; F. Child, with a puppy.
169. Illustration to the poems of Tshorai.
170. A Surimono; still life.
171. A Surimono; flowering cherry in a flower-pot.
172. A Surimono; red maple-tree, leaves, and butterflies.
173. The Crater of Inumitoghi.

No.

174. Painting on Brown Silk. A demon in a long, black robe, with before him the accessories of the mendicant priests, who beg on the roads in Japan.
175. View over a plain.
176. Illustration to a poem on the moon.
177. Sketch. A Fishing Village in winter.
178. Sketch. A Buddhist Saint (Chinese ink).
179. Sketch. Three studies for engraving: A. Mythological Personage, in a chariot drawn by dragons; B. A Cock and Hen; C. An Eagle with rabbit.
180. River bank at Itshigawa Sagami.
181. Sketch. Owl, on a trunk of a tree.
182. Snowy morning at Koishe Kawa.
183. Temple of Hongangi at Yedo.
184. Kakemono. Winter Landscape, in the high mountains.
185. Large Panel. A labourer looking at the landscape through his legs.
186. Large Panel. Corner of a forest with high fir-trees.
187. Kakemono. Stalk of a Water Plant, drawn across the moon.
188. Rice Decortication.
189. Mussel gathering at low tide in the bay of Sagami.
190. Painting on Wood. A combat between Jiraiyé and the dragon.
191. A Surimono; the end of the repast.
192. The Dance.
193. Sunset in the Bay of Sagami.
194. Lake Suwa.
195. Sketch. A Demon's Head.
196. Suspension Bridge at Tobi Koshi-no-Sakaï.
197. From the Series of Flowers—Convolvuli.
198. Embroiderers.
199. Sketch. Sennin seated on a rock.

No.

200. Sketch. Three studies for engraving: A. Glycines; B. Bamboos; C. Chrysanthemums.

201. Water Mill at Inden.

202. Woman kneeling.

203. The Sawpit.

204. A Bunch of Peonies.

The cases contain examples of the principal books illustrated by Hokusai. Their names will be found inscribed on them. The portfolios also contain a number of engravings, which it has not been found possible to place on the walls.

FINIS.

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